

If Only Liberty Pole Hill Could

THE MONROE EVENING TIMES, Saturday, March 14, 1970

Talk to Us

By SHARON GEORGE
BROOKLYN

If the Lord had graciously granted a voice for Liberty Pole Hill in Green County, stories full of glory and adventure could be told again and again to all anxious ears.

Alas, the Lord had other more important tasks for the Hill than to give it vocal cords. The voice and pen of man on down through the generations were produced to retell the stories of yesterday.

With His permission, may a part of the Hill's history be told from my lips. I'll speak and tell about Liberty Pole Hill's patriotism.

This certain story starts about the same time as the Civil War (1861-65) began. Perhaps the Hill played such a vital role because of its height and view. Its elevation level is 1,110 feet above sea level. The view from Liberty Pole Hill extends over Dane, Rock and the rest of Green County.

A log cabin was erected on the Hill for the purpose of enlisting soldiers and a site for important meetings. A flag of our nation was flown and could be seen waving in the breeze for miles around. At the Hill, the area soldiers joined together and marched on down to Janesville, in Rock County, to be sworn in the Union Army.

W. W. McLaughlin gave the Hill numerous recruits from Brooklyn. So efficient in raising men, a draft on the town for soldiers was avoided. Some of these bodies are now resting in the Jug Prairie Cemetery.

Names like the King brothers, Shepards, Taylors and the Floods, to mention just a few that are occupying graves there. Innumerable graves elsewhere are soldiers who have courageously lost their lives during the battles of that war.

After the war was over, the necessity of the Hill wasn't needed anymore. The flag and cabin deteriorated through the years. No effort was made to preserve either, but somehow, the name stuck—Liberty Hill.

Due to the steepness of the grade of the Hill, and its unsafe intersection, the roadway was considered dangerous! A new route was necessary!

In 1966-67, the roadway was relocated. At this time the Liberty Pole Hill site was included in the area purchased by

the County from the Rhyner estate. The present intersection is found several hundred feet to where the old road beds did intersect.

Almost a grave itself, covered with weeds, the Hill became reborn when Sheldon Yarwood (town chairman of the town of Brooklyn) spoke of his dream. A park upon historical ground that would have a beautiful view over the countryside. When suggested and discussed with the Town of Brooklyn board, all agreed such a venture seemed most favorable.

Sheldon then discussed this with the county and found them willing to own the site in partnership and share expenses. With the Green County Park committee's assistance, construction of a park on the Hill became a reality. Put to shame and almost forgotten, Liberty Pole Hill once again will have honor on its ground.

Helping Yarwood to make his dream a reality, Ben Beckman, Mrs. Gerber, Carl Schulz, Wilmer Dehmer, Charles Freitag, Ken Morgenthaler, the Conservation Department and

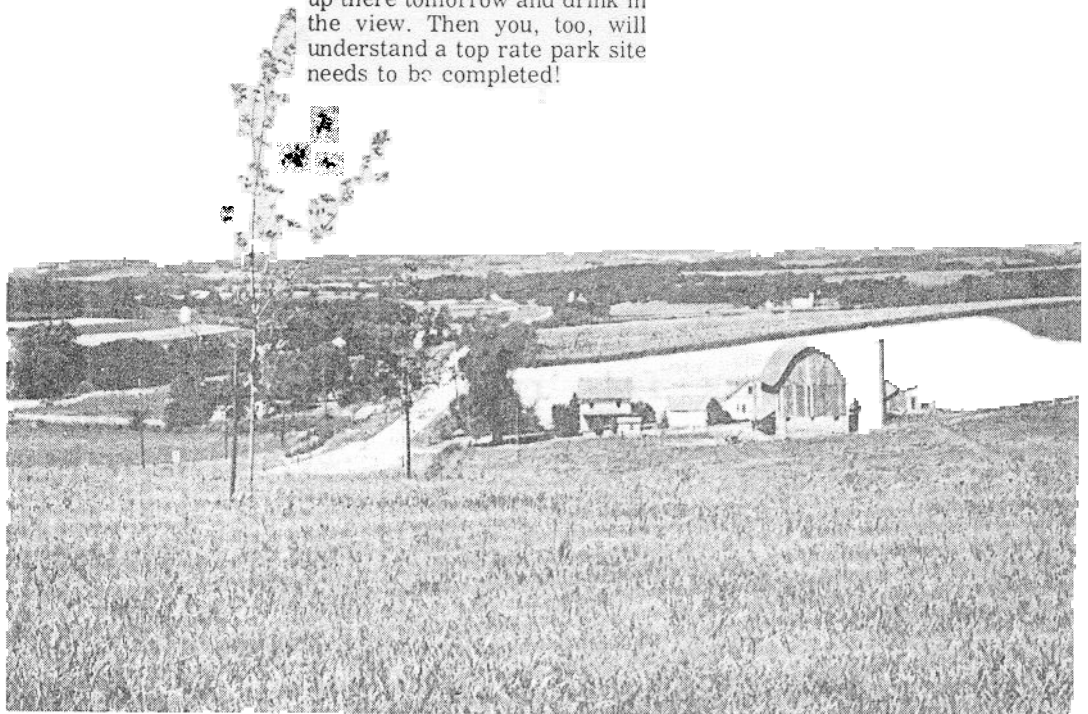
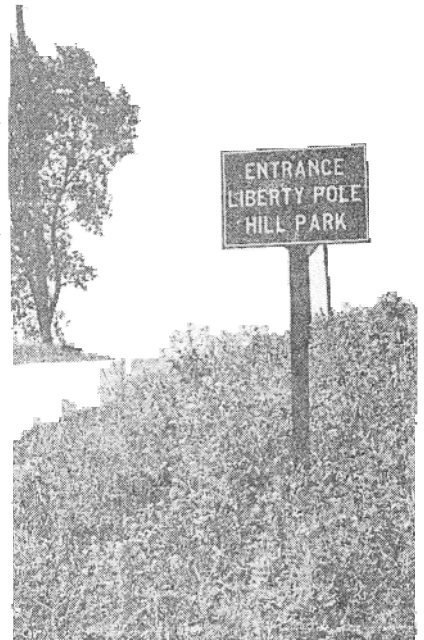
the Jolly Mixers (4-H Club) all performed various tasks to improve the Hill. Trees and bushes were planted for shade and beauty. A softball diamond with a back screen provides an invitation to anyone who cares to play ball.

In 1968, the Jolly Mixers purchased a flag from Congressman Kastenmeier. The flag once flew in Washington D. C., (our national capitol) and then came to Liberty Pole Hill.

Plans are popping up again for the grand old Hill. Everybody knows a park needs more than a ball diamond and a flagpole. Picnicers like to sit at tables, not on the ground. Suggestions of a shelter house, tables, grills, outdoor toilets and fresh water would make Liberty Pole Hill the park it should be.

I believe that there should also be a plaque or marker telling of Liberty Pole Hill's role in the Civil War. We need the assistance of interested individuals and organizations who might be able to help make these dreams too, a reality.

A dedication ceremony will be held when sufficient progress is made on the Hill. Take a drive up there tomorrow and drink in the view. Then you, too, will understand a top rate park site needs to be completed!



LIBERTY POLE HILL, in Green County, with an interesting history which dates from the time of the Civil War has become a park, and fittingly so. At the suggestion of Sheldon Yarwood, Brooklyn Township chairman, the county has agreed to own the park site in partnership with the Brooklyn Town board. Trees and bushes have been planted and a flag for the park, one which once flew over the capitol in Washington D. C., has been acquired. More plans for equipment and improvements are in the making so that it can become a popular place for picnics.

Liberty Pole Hill Will Fly Flag Again

Special to The Sentinel

Brooklyn, Wis.—For the first time since Civil war days, the American flag will fly again on Liberty Pole hill, Green county's highest elevation.

Sheldon Yarwood, Brooklyn town chairman, said the flag-pole will be erected in a 3 acre park to be developed following relocation of three rural roads. It may be ready by Flag day, 1967.

Liberty Pole hill was recruiting point for Union soldiers. Four King brothers enlisted there. So did Shepard and Taylor Melvin, who became sharpshooters.

Tiny Jug Prairie cemetery, a mile away, has the graves of 32 soldiers, most of them Civil war veterans.

John E. Thompson, 91, is the only man alive known to have seen the original pole. To the best of his recollection, the flag no longer was flown and the pole rotted or was removed in the 1880's.

During the Civil war the flag was raised and lowered daily. The ritual will be resumed when a new pole is erected, Yarwood said.

Liberty Pole hill, 1,102 feet above sea level, is the 34th highest elevation in Wisconsin. Thompson said the original pole stood south of the present site, but the ground was quarried for gravel, reducing its elevation.

When surveyors sought the high point, they placed it a quarter mile north of the quarry. This became known as Liberty Pole hill and will be the park site.



JOHN E. THOMPSON, 91, WITH FLAG ON LIBERTY POLE HILL

The fate of Liberty Pole Hill was discussed in 1996. The question of ownership was debated between the county and town.

Through the efforts of former Town Chairman, Sheldon Yarwood in March of 1966, the rerouting of the revised roadway at the west end of Amidon Road that ends at Highway 92 left a piece of land for a park. Cutting down the steep incline to avoid slippery conditions was the town board's intentions.

Earlier residents of this town registered on this hill, signing their X's, to volunteer fighting with the Union in the Civil War. The park was to be in their honor. A flag was erected. Regrettably, the flag was stolen by vandals and never replaced.

This piece of land (3.65 acres, more or less) was deeded to Green County from the Rhyner Estate. Both, the town and county, agreed to the arrangement of the Green County Conversation Department and Township to share the maintenance expense.

There was no problem of this arrangement until 1994. The yearly expense is \$1200.

When Cathy Anderson, the town clerk forgot to send the 1992-93 maintenance bills to the county, the following new clerk, Gil Hohnberger asked the county for their share of maintenance (\$995) for the past two years. They appeared 'flabber gasped.'

Wesley Pellett, the Green County Conversation and Parks Committee said he was never informed of this arrangement and denied the county's responsible to pay. This denial prompted the town to seek their attorney, Dan Floater's advice. He presented the deed to the county official and proved otherwise.

The county offered a transfer to the town, asking a fee of seventeen dollars to cover costs

LIBERTY POLE HILL
by Elsie M. Smith

Liberty Pole Hill is a high elevation of land in the Town of Brooklyn, located about 3 miles from the Village of Brooklyn at the junction of S.T. Highway 92 and C.T. Highway E. Elevation is 1600 ft. above sea level.

The Patriotic Citizens of the years of the Civil War erected a flag pole and kept the Stars and Stripes of our American flag waving throughout the Civil War, honoring our "Boys in Blue." It was a place for enlistments into the services, and other patriotic gatherings. Although the generation of those times have passed on, leaving no records. Its history has been handed down from generation to generation.

As the highway has been relocated bypassing the hill, land has been purchased by the Town of Brooklyn and County of Green. A Park is being made to restore the old landmark, called Liberty Pole Hill Park and once again the flag will fly over the historic hill. Green County Conservation, the 4-H Club and Town of Brooklyn are all active in the planting of trees, shrubs and flowers, a flag pole erected and other improvements made at this scenic location. Future plans include picnic facilities and additional landscaping.

From the top of Liberty Pole Hill Park visitors can get an impressive view which spans three counties: Rock, Green, and Dane, and on a clear day, the Blue Mounds on the border of Iowa County can be seen. And, no matter how hot or humid the day, a cool breeze is always assured.

Printed in Green Cnty Atlas 1969

Notes:

Information about the Hill came from the writing of Elsie S. Smith, a former town resident and town clerk (1886-1976). She lived near Jug Prairie Cemetery and School. Ray Barth wrote the article about John Thompson in the Milwaukee Sentential. Written in 1967, Thompson was the only surviving person that had seen the original flag pole that stood during the Civil War period. Thompson said, "During the Civil War, The flag was raised and lowered daily." To the best of his recollection, he stated, "Either the pole rotted or was removed in the late 1880's." As a little boy, he could see it from his home (lived near Jug Prairie Cemetery). "The pole had a glass ball that glistened in the sunlight."

In my original copy, before newspaper editing:

More veteran names were listed; many resting in graves at Jug Prairie.

Orrie Krause and Charles Freitag were the other two board members at that time.

The 4-H leader (at that time), Mrs. Thomas McCarthy ordered the flag from Representative Kastenmeir. The town submitted a thank-you in the Brooklyn Community News to the 4-H Club that was published.

The current town clerk, Lucille Brown, attended to the raising and taking down every day, until she discovered it was stolen. Another flag did not take its place.

The construction of the new road was cut down several hundred feet from the old road beds. Instead of going up a steep incline, a slight curve was developed (1966-67).

The park area covers about three acres (3.65, more or less).

IF ONLY LIBERTY POLE HILL COULD TALK TO US written by Sharon George

If the Lord had graciously granted a voice for Liberty Pole Hill in Green County, stories full of glory and adventure could be told again and again to all anxious ears. Alas, the Lord had other more important tasks for the hill than give it a voice. The voice and pen of man on down through the generations were produced to retell the stories of yesterday. With his permission, may a part of the hill's history be told from my lips. I'll speak and tell about Liberty Pole's patriotism.

This certain story starts about the same time as the Civil War (1861-65) began. Perhaps the hill played such a vital role because of its height and view. Its elevation level is 1,110 feet above sea level, the 34th highest elevation in Wisconsin. The view from the hill extends over Dane, Rock and the rest of Green counties.

At the outbreak of the "War Between the States," President Abraham Lincoln signed or first effective draft into law on March 3rd, 1863. A log cabin was erected on the hill for the purpose of enlisting soldiers and a site for important meetings. A flag of our nation was flown and could be seen waving in the breeze for miles around. At the hill, the area volunteers joined together and marched on down to Janesville in Rock County; were sworn in the Union Army.

Willis W. McLaughlin was very active in recruiting numerous young men from the Brooklyn area. So efficient in raising these numbers, a draft on the town was avoided. Some of those bodies are now resting in the Jug Prairie cemetery. Occupying grave sites are the Kings, Shepards, Taylors, Floods, Montgomery, Smith, Benson, Chatterton, Darkin, Geer, Lewis, Melvin, Purinton, Rolfe, Simmons, Starkweather, Swann, Thompson, Tomlin and Winter.

After the war was over, the necessity of the hill wasn't needed anymore. The flag and cabin deteriorated through the years. No effort was made to preserve either, somehow the name stayed; Liberty Pole Hill.

Due to the steepness of the grade of the hill on the roadway and its unsafe intersection, west of the hill, the town decided to change the contour of the road. In 1966-67, the roadway was re-located. The new road construction of the intersection was cut down several hundred feet from the old road beds; the hill, now, stood above the roadway.

The town chairman, Sheldon Yarwood and his board (Orrie Krause and Charles Freitag) worked very earnestly to save the hill as a historical landmark in the town. Sheldon spoke to the county to purchase the site from the Rhyner estate and share the expenses of maintaining the future park. The Green County Park committee (Ben Beckman, Mrs. Gerber, and Wilmer Dehmer) and Ken Morganthaler from the Conservation Department agreed to honor this three acre (3.65 acres, more or less) park.

In 1968, the Jolly Mixers 4-H Club presented a United States flag to be flown at the park. The clerk's leader, Mrs. Thomas McCarthy ordered the flag from Representative Kastenmeier that had been flown over the nation's capital, previously. A notice of thanks was published publicly in Brooklyn's Community News for their gift. The town clerk, Lucille Brown attended to the raising and taking down, every day; until she discovered it was stolen. A back-up screen was put up at the park for anyone wishing to play baseball and an outdoor grill. Trees and bushes were planted.

John E. Thompson at age 91 was the only man alive that had seen the original flag pole at the park. He said, "during the Civil War, the flag was raised and lowered daily." To the best of his recollection, he stated, "either the pole rotted or was removed in the late 1880's. As a little boy, John could see it from his home, near Jug Prairie. "The pole had a glass ball that glistened in the sunlight," he said.

Who owns Liberty Pole Hill Park

by Marian Viney

The county doesn't want to claim it, the town of Brooklyn has been maintaining it, and now the ownership of Liberty Pole Hill Park is in question. Board members discussed what should be done with the three acre park at the monthly board meeting Monday night.

Chairman Robin Patterson was not in favor of the town being responsible for the park because of the liability factors.

The banks are very steep around the park and there is a gravel pit without a fence right next to the park, explained Patterson.

"Many municipalities have had to take swings, slides, and merry-go-rounds out of parks because of the liability obligations," added Patterson.

Planning Commission Chairman Jim Scrivner explained that the liability problem should not be a concern.

"For example, farmers are protected and not held responsible

when they give hunters permission to go on their property," said Scrivner.

The ownership of the park came into question when the clerk sent Green County a bill for one-half of the maintenance for the last two years, which supposedly had been agreed to many years ago, however, no written agreement can be found. Green County Parks Department said they would pay the bill because the county did not own the park and that the town owned it.

But indeed, the County does hold the deed to the park, assured the town's attorney Dan Floater.

First supervisor Harold Langhammer questioned the hesitation of acquiring the park.

"Our concern is land use and if the population in Brooklyn township is doubled in another 10 years, doesn't the town want to expand the recreational lands?" said Langhammer. "Not just parks and swings, but hunting lands and lands free from buildings."

Board members decided to instruct the attorney to further research the property and make sure that Brooklyn township is first in line if the ownership of the park is changed.

Treasurer Marie Ross reported a balance of \$6,138.40 in the checking account, \$56,179.23 in the Local Government Investment Pool, and \$6,000.00 in the certifi-

cate of deposit, for a total of \$68,317.63. This amount does not include \$13,492 from the Department of Transportation for road improvements or \$35,000 from the State Trust Fund.

Bills for the month totaled \$76,162.94 minus the Green County road work bill for \$68,244.20, which the board members decided to hold until next month so the clerk could get some clarification on the road work bill. Board members were not sure if the town road improvements project (TRIP) will be included in the amount or if county had already subtracted the \$15,000 matched TRIP from the bill.

Also, it was unclear if the bill from Green County for road work included the total amount for the work done on Yarwood Road or just a portion of the work. The amount that was bid for the completion of Yarwood Road was significantly more than what was billed.

Patterson explained that since the equipment was already at Yarwood for the first part of the project, Green County gave the town a price break.

Clerk Gil Hohnberger presented the board members with a draft of the 1995 Budget. With all of the numbers computed, the town should have an estimated \$63,000 at the end of 1994 to carry over to the 1995 budget. Hohnberger will make corrections and have an updated version of the budget for the board members to review on October 27, when the board members will meet to discuss the Green County road work, problems with the bridge constructions, and the burning ordinance.

Board members decided that instead of requiring a burning permit for residents that are planning a controlled burn, they would approve an ordinance that requires residents to call the chief of their fire district when they are planning a controlled burn.

If the Fire Departments still has problems with residents not calling in, then a burning permit ordinance will be implemented.

Jerome Grunnet from the Albany Emergency Medical Service (EMS) provided the board members with a draft of Albany

EMS's 1995 budget. The amount that the town of Brooklyn will be charged will not change; however, the amount that residents are charged for an ambulance call has

increased to \$175 for residents and \$225 for nonresidents.

Scrivner concluded the meeting by reporting the activities of the planning commission.

Scrivner explained to the board members that a five acre parcel on Elmer Road was for sale and the split was from less than 35 acre parcel. After doing some checking, it was found that the split was made prior to the land division ordinance, therefore the split was okay; however, because of the way the split was recorded, the owner was receiving only one tax bill.

"I'm just making you aware that there is a flaw in the system that is allowing people to pay less taxes then they are responsible for," said Scrivner.

The planning commission also is reviewing a land division of six acres for a mobile home. The owner has refused to provide information, so the commission members have referred this to the town's attorney.

Another land division is being reviewed because it didn't go through the process, but was approved by the board members in June. Scrivner will proceed with the paper work.

Scrivner attended the village of Brooklyn's Planning Committee meeting. At this point he doesn't think that the town should worry about being annexed, but he will continue to attend the meetings so that the town is aware of the development in the village.

Oregon Observer, Thursday, October 20, 1994--